

The epistle of

the famous and great Clerke Philip Me-
lancton made unto oure late Souerepne
Lorde Kynge Henry the eight, for the reuo-
kinge and abolishing of the six articles
set forth and enacted by the craftie
meanes and procurement of
certepne of our prelates
of the clergie, new-
ly translated out
of laten into
to En-
glishe by
J.C.

The truth wyl haue
the victorie,



Moste famous, and noble
 kyng there were certayne
 pagā emperours of Rome
 As Adrianus Pins and af-
 terwarde Varrus and Marke (beinge bre-
 threne) whiche not ouely recepued fauoura-
 bly the defences, of the christians, but also
 they were of so great valure with those mo-
 derate princes, that they swaged their wra-
 the agaynst the christians, and thereby obteyned
 the aswagynge of their cruell decrees, which
 they had made agaynst them.

Therefore seinge there is a decree putte
 forth in your highnes realme of Englande
 agaynst the godlie doctrine (which is need-
 full to the churche) whiche we professe. I be-
 seche your grace and moste honourable ma-
 iestie both to reade and heare thys our com-
 plaint gently. Specially seinge I haue ente-
 ded to wyte these thinges vnto you, not on-
 ly for my sake, but rather for the sauegarde
 of the churche.

Inasmuche therefore as those heathen
 princes did admitte, and allow the defences
 of the christians, howe muche more is it be-
 semynge for a kyng of the christe profession,
 and one that is occupied in the studie of ho-
 lie scripture, to here the complaintes & wro-
 ynges of the godlie in the churche.

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 and one that is occupied in the studie of ho-
 lie scripture, to here the complaintes & wra-
 thes of the godlie in the churche.

To kynge Henry the eight.

And I wryte so muche the gladlier vnto
your grace, for that ye heretofore favoura-
bly receyued my letters, whiche I wrote vnto
your grace, declaring a singuler token of
your beniuolence towards me, and in this
matter ye geue me an hope that ye wyl not
vntowplyngly reade these thynges, for the
maner of the wrytyng sheweth, that the by-
shoppees are vndoubtedly the cause and au-
thors of the decrees ther made, & not your
grace, although as it often chaunceth, they
haue broughte aboute wth their sophistrie,
that your graces assent should come therto.
As the nobles droue Darius, whiche was
a wyle and a ryghteous prince, to put Da-
niell vnto the Lions. It was neuer vncowly
for princes to redresse an vnrightheous cru-
eltye, and as it is comonly sayd to haue a se-
conde deliberation.

The most wise cite of Athens had made
a decree after that the cite of Mitelene was
recovered (whiche had forsaken them) that
the cite should be destroyed vtterly and al
the citizins slayne. There was a shippe sent
whiche should bringe this commaunde-
ment to the hoste. On the morowe after (the
matter beinge better shewed vnto them and
better pondered) there was a decree made
contrarie, whiche was that the punishment
should

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shoulde not stretch vnto al, but that a fewe
whiche were the causers of the forsakynge
shoulde be punished, and the citie saued.

Therefore was there sent an other shippe
whiche was commaunded to make haste,
that myghte come before the former shippe
as it also hapened.

This citie of Athens whiche gouerned
farre and wyde, was not ashamed to re-
dresse openly the former decree, there are
manie examples of this kynde, whereof I
doubt not a great part are knowen to your
grace. And as concernynge the church, prin-
ces haue verie often tynes redressed their
decrees, as Nabuchodonosor and Darius
did, there was a decree put forth in Al-
sius name concernynge the kyllynge of the
Jewes, the same was afterwarde called a
gapne. And so did Adrianus and Anthonie
redresse their decrees.

Although therfore there be a decree made
in Englande (whiche threateneth punish-
ment straunge from the custome of the true
church and from the Canon lawes) yet I
thought it lawfull for vs to desire, that this
crueltie come not. And in that thyng I am
not onely moued with the ieopardie of them
that are of our opinion, but also I am sorie
that you are as it were the seruant of other

To kyng Henry the iight.
mennes crueltie and wyckednesse. I am sorp
that Chyestes doctrine is excluded, and that
naughtie customes are stablished, and lecher
ry and baudry strengthened and approued.

I heare sape that certayne excellent men
in learnyng and godlines, as latimer and o
ther are kepte in prizon, for not consentynge
vnto that is decreed. Vnto whom I wishe a
strength of minde worthe for chryistians for
al: though there can nothynge happen vnto
them better or moore glorious, then to suffre
death in so playne a confession for the truth:
yet I woulde not haue your grace to be
spryncled wth bloud of such men. I would
not haue these lanternes of light to be quen
ched, nor place gauen to the vngodly, and
phariseical hatred of the enemies of Chyist.
I would not haue a pleasure giue to the Ro
mishe antichyist, which reioyseth at the herte
that your grace now beareth harnes for him
agaynst vs, and hopeth that he shal thoroowe
the byshoppes laboure at length some reco
uer the possions, from whiche he was thrust
by your honeste and godly councelles. We
seeth that the byshoppes gve place to your
graces wpll and pleasure for a season, but
wth mynde and perpetual couenaint they
be ioynd stpl with the Romishe byshoppe.
The Romishe byshoppes know these wyles
they

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they haue before thys tyme wrestled out of many mooste sore tempestes wpth tarpinge and deferpunge, they haue a remembraunce of thys tyme, and of the sundrie labour of the chaungeable worlde which hath brought many thynge to a better passe.

There are manie good & learned men in Germanie whiche conceived an hope that it shoulde come to passe, that your authoritie shoulde also steare other kynges at the last to leaue of crueltie a thing not mete for christe princes and to take a deliberation for redresse of errours. And of thys mooste holy and godly coūcel they determined that your grace shoulde be the ringe leader and beginning, but now by your foresaped proceedings we haue taken no sinale wound for the wrath of other kynges is hereby confirmed, the frowardnes of the ungodlie is encreased, & great olde errours are stablised. But the bpschoppes vndoubtedlye asserme that they defend not errours, but true sentences & the lawe of God, although they know the same to be contrary to the lawe of God and to repugne to the apostolike church. Yet notwithstanding these craftie marchauntes can now finde goodlie interpretation and (as Euripides calleth them) craftie opintmetes and medicines to blynd mennes eyes

To hyng Henry the eight.

wyth all, and whiche after the outwarde
shyne seme to eschewe errours, fraude, and
abuses, whiche deceyue the ryghte iudge-
ment.

Thys sophistrie hath nowe not onely a
greate name of wisedome in Englande, but
also at Rome it beareth a great rule, where
as Cardinall Contararius Sudoletus and
Reynolde Pole papnte abuses wyth newe
counterfeyte colours. In douchelande also
doth thys sophistrie make worse the mindes
of man. Wherefore I do not merueyle
greatly that many be in Englande moued
by suche bewitched craftie persuations, al-
though they lacke neither learning nor iud-
gement. For somtyme wyle men are led fro
the truth with gorgeous persuations. That
sayinge of Simonides is proued, whiche
was of familiar acquaintance wyth the
moste excellent men of his age as Themis-
tokles and others, that is, an opinion doth
often wronge vnto the truth, and often is a
wronge opiniō more apparāt then the truth,
whiche thyng chiefly hapeneth in the strif-
es of religion, where the deuyl dissacioneth
hym selfe into an angel of lighte, and garni-
sheth false opinions with al fained colours
possible. How fette is the cauillation of that
heretike Samolatenus vpon the Gospel of
saynt

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Saint John, in the beginning was the worde
etc. Yet it is full of vngodlines, but I leaue
nowe examples of other men.

Bea in the verie decree made in pour par-
liament howe manp thynge be put sophi-
sticallp and craftelp, as auricular confession
(saph the article) is needful to be kept, whp
doth it not plapnlp sape that the numbzpng
of spynes in cōfession is needfull by the lawe
of God, the bpschoppes knewe wel, that this
sentence is false. Therefore are the wordes
put generallp in the acte that there myght a
myst be cast before the peoples eyes, whiche
is as when they say generallp confession is
needfull by the lawe of God.

Lyke bewptched popntes are in the ar-
ticle of the priuie masses althoughe thys
be openly false, that it is needfull to holde
and keepe priuie masses. For who thoughte
so, more then foure hundreth yeres after the
Apostles, when there were no priuie masses
at all, but after in the same article doth fo-
lowe a sophisme, as where they say that the
people myght recepue thereby rtyches com-
fortes and benifites, whp adde they not
what cōfortes, and what benifites? The bps-
choppes name not to what ende the merites
of the priuie masses shoulde be applied, by-
cause they know that it can not be defended
and

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And so they play and mocke wpth wordes that they maie slippe out of the application if it be disprayed, and yet wil they haue the application of the priue masses vnderstand of the people, they wll haue thys Idolatrous perswasion confirmed, and that thys sacrifice deserueth remissio of sinne of, paine and punishment, and the alwagement of all sorowes besides that lucre and gapne in buyinge and sellinge, and what so euer mannes carefulnes hath Imagined.

A lyke sophistrie is it as when they saie that the wedlocke of priestes is agaynst the worde of God, they not vnkowpunge that playn text of Paul saying, a byshop must be faultles the husband of one wyfe. Wherfore they knowe that wedlocke is graunted vnto priestes by the lawe of God, but bicause they saie nowe that a bowe is added, they mocke wpth wordes, for they saie not onely that the wedlocke is lette wpth the bowe, but they put theyr article playnely sayinge that wedlocke of priestes doth repugne to the worde of God. Besyde that what shames fulnes and tirannie adde they when they commaunde them to be kylled that wll not breake theyr wedlocke and parte from theyr wyues, where as yet the bowe of priestes if that there were anie, or if it were of valure,
doth

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doeth onely so farre oblige and bynde them
that they abyde not in the ministracion of
priesthod in case that they should marp wo-
ues. Thys is the meanyng of the counsels
and of the Cannon lawes as it is playne
and manifest.

Shameles bpsoppes, and Wpcked
Stephin Gardiner bpshoppe of Wyndhe-
sker, which thinketh thus to decepue the eyes
of christen people, & the iudgment of all the
godlie the whole worlde thoroowe. By these
counterfeyte and decepuable colours these
thynge haue I reherfed that theyr sopistrie
spied out pour grace maye iudge of the wyl
and mynde of the bpsoppes and of theyr
cōsels, for if that they willingly and herte-
ly soughte the truth, they woulde not vse
suche iudglings and counterfeyte colours.
For sophistrie is a bond thing and worthe
of hate in thys and all other matters, and
chiefelie to be eschewed, and fledde in religi-
on, for that it is molte greate wpckednesse
to rent and desple heauenly sayinges. And
therefore hath the deuill his name of thys
crafte, for by fraudfull cauillations and be-
witchynge pranches he plucketh the worde
of God from men.

Why do not these bpsoppes playnly cō-
fesse that they wyl suffre none amendement
of

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of doctrine and true service of God: because
it shoulde bespote thei^r dignities, rtyches
and pleasures. Wherfore do not the other
whiche haue approued thei^r doinges and
decrees playnely saie that they keepe them
for the blage of the church, and that for pro-
fites sake tranquillitie and comelynesse: to
graunte and confesse thys thynge it were
playnes and no cloyed matter. But nowe
whyle as they sayne the studie and desire of
the trueth and godlines vnder that pretence
they do but sayne folishe and vayne sophis-
mes to cloke their peruerfed wyl and minde
and yet not the lesse thei^r wyl is made ma-
nifeste, so that thei^r Sophismes doe not
hide thei^r errours, for doubtles the articles
in this decree, are false and vngodlie, howe
goodlie so euer they be set forth. Wherefore
it is to be desired that the bisshoppes remem-
bre the heauenly threate in the prophete E-
saie, whiche is wo be vnto you that make
wicked lawes, what wyl you do in the day
of visitation and miserie to come, and wo be
vnto you that saie that euyl is good.

Nowe I come therfore vnto the very selfe
thynge. It can not be denied but that there
was continual and horrible darkenes in the
churche, for mennes traditions were not on-
ly mertydomes of godly consciences, but
they

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they were also reputed the true seruice of
God, whiche thynge is yet muche more un-
worthp to be hearde, seinge also they were
manifest faultie, for there were bowes made
gpfes gguen to churches, clothyng and
disgyspge, chople of meates, mumblpge
and pattrpge of prapers, pardones, honou-
rpge Images, sapntes were worlhypped
wpth manifest Idolatrie, the true seruice of
God, and good workes were unknowe, and
to conclude there was a greate lpkelpnes of
the heathen religion as is yet stppl at Rome
the true doctrine of penaunce, of remission
of synne whiche cometh bp fapth in Chyste
of the rpghtuousnes of fapeth, of the diffe-
rence betwene the lawe and the Gospell, and
of the right vse of the sacramentes was un-
known, the keyes of the churche were apli-
ed to mainteyne the Popes tirannie, cere-
monies made bp men were preferred farre
before ciuile duties. Vnto these errours was
iopned a lpe defiled wpth lecherie bp rea-
son of the lawe, and howe of single lpe for-
byddpge the wedlocke and marpages of
priestes.

fforth of the sayed darkenes God hath
rapsled bp and purged the churche bp true
doctrine, for we muste confesse that so many
greate and veterate errours were not per-
cepued

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repued and spied out by mannes diligence
but by the lpyght of the Gospel, whiche by
the gyfte of God is shewed agayne vnto
the churche, for the holie goste prophesied
that in the latter dayes the godlie shall haue
more behemēt strifes with the antichristes,
and he prophesied also that antichrist beinge
besette aboute wth a greate company of
bishops of hypocrites and of princes shoud
slep the godly. That these thynges are now
done, the thyng it selfe sheweth for the tirā-
nie of the bishoppe of Rome brought the er-
rours in, & partly and partly cōfirmed the,
and he now defendeth them wth all his
might as the prophete Daniell prophesied.

And wereiopsed greatly that your grace
was seperated frō hym, and hoped that the
Englishe churche shoulde florish agayne
but trulpy your bpsoppes are not plucked
from the Romishe antichrist, for they defend
his errors, naughtines and Idolatye, for
the forsayd articles are craftely picked forth
by them whereas they stablishe mennes tra-
ditions and confirme, and approue chiefely,
bowes, single lpyfe and confession, they de-
fende not onely theyr authoritie, but also all
maner of errors, as when they keepe styll
the priuie masses. Thus haue they craftely
provided that no redres nor amendmēt may
be

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be instituted, thep^r dignities and r^ytches are
in saftie. The thing it selfe sheweth that the
b^yshoppes haue brought aboute the same.
Who is not sorpe thus to se the glozie of
Christ thus oppzessed, for as I haue said the
matter lyeth not only in these articles, of the
which mētion is made in thep^r forsaied de-
crees; but also the other articles of pure doc-
trine are al oppzessed, for if mēnes traditiōs
& worshippinges of God after mēnes Ima-
ginatiōs be needful, why doth Paul so oftē
abhorre mēnes traditiōs? For it is no sinall
faute and spūne to ordeyne Goddes seruice
w^ythout the commaundement of God, or
to defende and mapnteyne suche thynge to
be the true seruice of God. Thys boldnesse
doeth God horribly deteste, whiche w^yll be
knowne and worshpped after his owne
worde and ordinaunce, he w^yll in no w^yse
haue religiōs to be Imagined after mēnes
pleasures. D^r els al the religions of al men
were to be allowed & approued, thou shalt
not leane vnto thy owne w^ysedome, sayeth
the scripture, for the father hath sent Christe
and him the father cōmaundeth to be heard
& not the craftie inuentions of men, whiche
do tēper and forge religions to thep^r owne
couetousnes.

But as concerning the priue masses, bo-
wes

To kpnge Henry the eight.

wes, single lyfe, & nūbyng of spūes in au-
ricular confession, as it is openly knowen,
they are the vnttrue seruice of God ordeined
by mē, for although the Lordes supper were
ordepned of the Lorde, yet the priuie masses
are an vngodly and leude vsprynge of the
Lordes supper, for in the priuie and cānon
of the masse, how much wyckednes is there
for they sape that Chyste is offered and that
this worke is a sacrifice that raunforneth the
quicke and the dead. These thynges are not
ordepned of Chyste, no they are alwayes a-
gainst the Gospel and do repugne agaynst
the same, for Chyste wyl not haue him selfe
to be offered of the sacrificer, neither can the
worke it selfe, neither of the offerer, nor yet
of the recepuer by any meanes be a sacrifice
for an other for it is a mainfest idolatrie and
doeth oppresse the true doctrine of our be-
liefe and fapth and also the ryght vse of the
sacramēt, for through our beliefe and fapth
in Chyist we are iustified and made rightu-
ous and not by the worke and offerpnge of
the sacrificer, seinge also that the supper was
ordeined to thentēt that the minister should
teache and distribute it to the other that they
whiche repent myght be admonished verily
to beleue that the promyses of the Gospel
belonge vnto them seing there is here a wit-
nes

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nes sette forth that we are the membres of
Christ and washed wpth his bloude. From
thys vse whiche is ordeyned in the Gospell
and was obserued in the churche more then
three hundreth yeres after Christes passion,
is it not lawefull to departe, for trulp it is a
great vngodlines to chaunge the ordinaunce
of God in other vses the was instituted by
hym accordynge as it is specified in the se-
cond of the ten commaundementes. Where-
fore seinge that the priue masses by offering
of sacrifices and applicatiō, and to conclude
by many other wayes are most fargone fro
the institution and ordinaunce of Christ they
ought not to be kept but to be done awaye
for Paule sayth fye ye from Idolatrie and
forsooth there are manifold Idolatries in the
priue masses, whiche is no merueyle that
the byshops of Rome defende the same for
in the latter dayes, sayeth the scripture there
shall mooste greate Idolatrie reygne in the
place of the churche as Christe doeth shewe
sayinge, when ye shall se the abomination
of desolation, whiche is spoken by Daniell
the prophete standynge in the holie place, he
that readeth, lette him vnderstande it, and in
the .xi. Chapter he sayeth, he shall worshyp
the God Maosin in his place, and the God
whiche his fathers knewe not, shall he wor-

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To kynge Henry the eight.

Thyppe with golde and syluer and precious stones, both these places speake of the priue masses. Thys maner of worshyping, this abusinge of the Sacramente doeth God gratly abhorre. Howe many open and manifest wyckednes and crymes are founde in this ceremonie and rite. It is applied to lucre and gaines. The wicked and the vnworthy are compelled to receyue it, wpll they or wpll they not. They applie it also for the quicke and the deade. Thei promise to some a fortunate viage, one thynge to one, and to an other, an other thynge. But al other thinges oughte no lesse to be reprovued, whiche the ignoraunte people do not so well se. For the worshyping of God and his seruice oughte not to be ordeyned after mennes pleasures and Imaginations, but according to his godly ordinaunce and commaundement. Nowe where as men make a sacrifice of thys worke and offerynge they Imagen and thynke that priue masses oughte to be done and kept as though God would be worshipped after that rite and maner. And we se that the masses are boughte and solde for golde and syluer, and not wpythout great coste and apparel, and that the Sacramēt is borne and caried about to be worshipped in golde and syluer, where as the sacrament

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mēt was not ordeigned to this entē. Wherefore seing the cōmaūdemēt of God cōmaūdet to fye Idolatrie, the priuie masses ought not to be kepte, seing also as it is manifest that there was none in the fyste and primatiue church. And therefore I do merueple why that they say that the priuie masses are needful to be kept. Wāted the church three hundred yeres after the Apostles any one thing needful in the church of God? What can be more folpshly or wprkedly spoken.

We se now that priuie masses be defended wpth moste greute endenoure, whiche thynge is done of some bycause they feare the losse of theyr lucre, of other bycause they please the appetite of the common people whiche wpth an euill wpll, as they thynke suffereth thys healde to be taken from them more then any true cause why, but yet there is a playne and true cause why that they oughte to be putte awaye, fyste the applyinge of the masse is vndoubtedly wprked and vngodlie, for the sacrificer doeth not merite and deserue grace for an other seinge that euerie one is made ryghtuous and iustified by his owne fapth. Neither wil God haue any man to truste in any maner of ceremonye: but only in Chyestes benifite. And

To kynge Henry the eight.

herely the applipnge of it for the dead is ful
of errours. Nowe here are Sophismes I-
magined and sayned all in bayne for to ex-
cuse the application of the priuie masse. For
they saye none of all the people iudgeth o-
therwysse but the wyke of the sacrificer pro-
fiteth the whole church for the priuie can-
non of the masse (saye they) doth prouesse the
same thinges, they do playnely mocke with
wordes, and there be in dede some craftie
marchauntes whiche denie that they applie
the masses seinge that they knowe that the
errour of the people is al readie ynough sta-
blished & confirmed by theyr dede although
they thynke otherwysse them selues, and
what is he that should otherwise thinke but
that saynyng and dissimulation ought to be
far fro the godly rites & ceremonies. Let vs
therfore vse the as the scripture doth teach &
as the maner & vse was at the fyrst church
certayne hundreth yeres. Why hath the
boldnes of men gone from the olde maner
and vse? Why is the faute of other men now
defended whiche haue chaunged the ordi-
nauce of Christ? Nowe although any man
woulde saye that he applieth not the priuie
masses: yet doeth he the ceremonie so aparte
that he thynketh this oblerupnge to be the
true seruice and worshippng that God re-
qui-

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quireth, the whiche is to be improued seinge
that God wpll not be worshipped (as sayed
is) after mennes affectiōs and pleasure, but
accordpng to his godly ordinaunce. Where-
fore I beseeche your grace, for the glorie of
Christes sake, that ye wpll not defende the
article of the decree concernynge the priue
masses, but to suffre it to be had in more di-
ligent deliberation of the godly and learned
men. Durs haue a stalble and open wptnes
of the first church, which I feare not to say
agapnst all the after comers which haue de-
filed the iudgemēt of the olde doctrine with
many errors. The other erreure neede no
longe disputation. For wicked bowes say-
ned and impossible oughte not to be kepte.
There is no doubte but thys is the persua-
sion of bowes that these workes ordepedned
and instituted by men are the true seruice of
God, for so thynke they also that speake
most gētly. Other adde mo errors whiche
is that these workes are perfection and de-
serue everlasting life. And all these oppiniōs
do the godly letters reprove. For Christe
sayth they worshyppe me in vayne with the
cōmandementes of man. And Paule sayth
these very observations are the doctrine of
the deupll because they gyue vnto mennes
traditions, a false honoure that they be the

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true service of God they darken the sayeth
and the right worshyppe of God. And
to the Collosians he sayth lette no man de-
ceyue you wth sayned holines. And whp
(sayeth he) make ye decrees. Therefore these
bowes of mēes traditiōs, are in verp dede
a wyched service of God, helpe many o-
ther fautes whiche come herebp. For the
whole kynde of monkes with howe muche
superstition lye they in praping to sayntes
in sundrie maner of clothynge, chople and
difference of meates, superstitious prayers
wthout measure, and many other abusions
of the whiche euerie one is a cause sufficient
that the bowes are vasureles. And also se-
inge that, the moste parte of them be moued
to thys kynde of lypynge for greate chere
and easp feedynge of thep: bealies vnder the
pretence and colour of religion.

Furthermore as concernynge the howe
of single life, it is not possible for al men, as
sayeth Chylte hym selfe, not all men receiue
thys worde. And all suhe bowes muste be
broken, as maye not be perfourmed wth-
out spūne, but these thynge are sufficiently
expounded in an other place by vs, and for-
soth I do merueyle greatly that the bowe
of priestes is strenghtliar put forth in the
Englishe decree, then the bowe of monkes
seing

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seinge the cannon lawes them selues w^oll
onely and in so farre, a prieste to be obliged
to single lⁱfe, if he remayne in the ministra-
tion and office of his priesthode. And herely
I shoke for feare readynge thys article, for
it forbiddeth Matrimonie and breaketh the
marriage beinge already made. And w^oth
that addeth the paine of death for those prie-
stes that w^oll not parte from the^r w^oues.
And although in some places the godly be
h^olled for the^r wedlocke, the^r beynge prie-
stes, yet hath no man hitherto ben so bolde
to putte suche lawes in w^orytynge, for many
w^ould perceiue that all whole mynded and
moderate men woulde abhorre thys cruel-
tie, and therefore they feared the iudgement
of the after comers. Who wold beleue that
in the church (in the whiche there oughte to
be a principall mekenes toward the godly)
there coulde remayne so greate a crueltye
that the payne of death shoulde be ordeyned
agaynst the godly for marriage sake. Nowe
I thynke that they wil saie that they breake
the^r bowe. Vnto whom I answered. If the
thys bowe is valureles (as is sayed before)
b^ycause it is false seruice and w^ordshyping
of God, and is therew^oth impossible to be
kept. Besydes that in case it were of valure,
it obligeth and b^yndeth them not that leaue

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and ceasse of any further ministracion of the
office of priesthode, in case after that they
marry wyues. And to conclude if the bishops
would provide remedie for satisfie of consci-
ences, they should hereafter consecrate prie-
stes without any vow, so that they maye
remain in the ministeringe and office of
priesthode, although afterwarde they mari-
ed wyues, as it is manifest by the olde can-
non lawes that sometime there was manie
sacred priestes without any vow of single
lyfe, the whiche although they afterwarde
married wyues, yet not the lesse they remain-
ed still in the ministering & office of the
priesthode, as witnesseth the Chapter. *De*
Diaconi. distinct. Cxxviii. Nowe verely I
doubte what I shal saye or complayne upō.
For as concernynge this article I may not
excuse their ignorance, seeing that they know
the commaundement of God where as Paule
sayeth bycause of fornication lette every mā
haue his owne wyfe. And euery man seeth
what the lyfe of single liuing is. The com-
playntes of the good men are known, and
the baudie of the euyl men is manifest. But
happetly the bishoppes in this matter do al-
lowe Epicureus opinion that they iudge
that God is not offended with baudry. Of
which if they thinke, then plead we an hard
cause

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cause before such Judges, I do knowe that
single lpe is more mete for the keepng of
the pompe of bpschoppes and of cathedrall
churches, and to preserue thep^r rptches, then
is wedlocke. And thys I thynke to be the
cause whp that they so greatly abhorre the
wedlocke of priestes. But O miserable
churche if that thy lawes be compelled not
to serue the truth nor vnto the wpl of God,
but vnto the wrongfull profites, pleasures,
and comodities of men, for truely they do
erre that thinke that they maye make lawes
agaynst the commaundement of God and
the lawe of nature so they be profitable for
preseruacion of profites and rptches.

And verely I am sorie from my herte for
your graces sake (moste famous and excel-
lent kpng) and also for the church for Chri-
stes sake. We shewe forth that ye improue
and abolishe the tirannie of the bpschoppe of
Rome and ye truely call hym Antichriste,
but in the meane time in a maner ye defende
his lawes whiche are euen the sinnowes of
his power. As priuie masses, single lpe, & al
other superstitions. Ye threaten moste
cruell payne and punishment vnto good mē
and those that be very members of Chyste
for bringe agaynst the same. We abolishe the
very truth of the gospel begimng to shine
in

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in your church. This is not to take awaye
Antichrist but to confirme and stablish him
I beseeche your grace for our Lorde Jesus
Christes sake that ye defile not your consci-
ence wth the defence of these your articles
whiche the b^{is}hoppes haue made of priuie
masses, of vowes, of confession and of the
forbiddinge and abusing of the whole vse
of the Sacramēt. For it is no small vice and
spine to stablish and approue Idolatrie,
errours, crueltie, and bandie. If the Ro-
mish b^{is}hoppe shoulde holde a counsell
now instatlie, what other chiefe articles and
decrees would he thrust abroad in the world
but these verie same which your b^{is}hoppes
reherse and haue made al readie?

Knowe I beseeche your grace the wyles
of the deuill whiche is wont chiefly to as-
saut and tempt the chiefe rulers and gouer-
ners, and seinge that he is the ennemie of
Christe, and from the begynninge of the
worlde he goeth principally aboute wth
all wylpnesse, doinge that in hym lyeth to
trape agaynst Christe, by spreadyng abroad
of wicked and vngodly opinions, and stea-
rpyng by of Idolatrie, and besyde that, that
mankynde maye be defiled wth wrongfull
slaughters and baudie: vnto these thynges
he abuseth the w^{yt}tes and ingiunes of the
hyppoc

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hypocrites & the strengthes of the mightie,
as the stories of al times do shew that great
Emperours and Princes were often cruell
agains the church, yet not the lesse, some
Princes by Gods plucke from that holte of
Spanes unto his church, and would haue
them to knowe the true doctrine and seruice
of God. As Abraham taught by Amelech
and Joseph the kynges of Egypt, and after-
warde Dauid, Josaphath, Ezechias, were
excellent in godlinesse, Daniell moued the
kinges of Caldee and Persep to the know-
ledge of the truth.

And Englande broughte forth a godly
Prince to the worlde named Constantine in
thys company I woulde rather wishe your
grace for to be, then amonge the enemies of
Christe whiche are defiled wth Idolatrie
and superstition & spinked wth the blood
of the godly. Of whom God wll take pu-
nishment as many lyke examples of the
scripture do shewe and declare.

Agayne therefore I praye you (for oure
Lorde Jesus Christes sake) that your grace
wll swage and amende the bishoppes de-
crees, and there thorow serue the glorie of
Christ and take hede to your owne saluati-
on and wealth of your church. Your grace
also moued wth the hertie peticiōs and de-

To kynge Henry the eight.

sires of many godly men the whole world
thorow whiche praye and desire that some
Kynge may applie thei^r authorities to the
true redresse and amendement of the church
and to take awaie all ungodly and wicked
service and worshyping of God, and that
they maye set abroad the Gospel of Christ.
Beholde also those godly men whiche are
prisoned for the Gospel sake, seinge they are
the true members of Christ, for doubtles if
the decree of the bishoppes be not chaun-
ged: thei^r crueltie wyl flowe abroad in your
church without ende. For those hath the
deuill as ministers of his fury, and wood-
nes agaynst Christ. And them steared he vp
to teare and rent Christes members.

All the godly praye and entierly beseeke
your grace that ye prefer not the wicked
and cruell sentences, and Sophisticall cauil-
lation of these your bishoppes before oure
true and moste ryghtuous desire, the which
thyng if they obtayne of your grace, God
wyl without doubt render vnto you great
rewards for your godlines and your ver-
tue shall be praysed by the wyrtynge of let-
ters and voice of all godly men, for God
wyl iudge them wel. And the remembraunce
of so grea^te thynges wyl remayne vnto the
after comers as longe as letters lyue. And
seinge

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beinge that we serue the glozie of Christ and
that oure churches are Christes churches
here shall nothynge want that can defende
hys godly cause, and that can furnishe the
wel deseruers therof wpth theyr dew praise
and dyspraysle of crueltie. Christe goeth a-
boute hungrie, thyrstie, prisioned and naked,
complaininge of the woodnes of the b-
shoppes and of the moste wrongfull crueltie
of Kynge and Princes desirynge that the
membres of his bodie be not rent and torne
but that the true churche be defended, and
the Gospel to florishe and to knowe hym,
recepue him, and nourishe hym, it is both
the duetie of a godly King, and most
acceptable seruice to God. Thus
fare ye well at Wittēberge
the laste daie of June.

Anno. M.D.XL.

Philip Melancton.

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the.18. of Maye.

To kyng Henry the eight.

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thorowe whiche prape and desire that some
Kynge may applie theiꝝ authorities to the
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